## IN THE CLAIMS:

Please substitute the following claims for the same numbered claims in the application:

1.    (Currently Amended) A method of dynamically bidding, through a software agent, in online auctions accessible over a communications network, said method ~~including the steps of~~ comprising:

said agent initially receiving bidding-related information from a bidder;

said agent initially selecting a plurality of auctions to place bids in, in accordance with said bidding-related information and a current status of one or more auctions, and placing bids in said plurality of auctions, wherein said plurality of auctions are located across multiple online auction sites and are scheduled to close for bidding simultaneously; and

said agent, on being outbid in an auction, itself determining, on the basis of said bidding-related information and by checking the current status of one or more auctions, wherein said checking comprises obtaining information relating to a value of a current highest bid in a first auction and using said information in determining whether to place an additional bid in said first auction or some other auction and, if ~~so~~ said agent determines to place an additional bid, said agent selecting an auction to place said additional bid in, and placing said additional bid in said selected auction,

wherein said bidding-related information received from said bidder comprises:

a specified limit on a total value of each bid in each auction and a total value of all bids from all auctions; ~~and~~

~~a specified rule for determining at any time, whether said agent, without further recourse to said bidder, should place additional bids and, if so, in which auctions to place said additional bids, wherein said specified rule comprises:~~

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wherein selection of an auction for placing a bid in, whether initially or on being outbid, by said agent, is to be such that a current bidder surplus of said bid is maximized and non-negative, wherein said current bidder surplus of said bid comprises an excess of a monetary value attached by said bidder to an item to be bid upon over a monetary value of said bid by said agent, and

wherein selection of an auction for placing a bid in, whether initially or on being outbid, by said agent, is to be such that the current bidder profitability of said bid is maximized[[,]] and non-negative, wherein said current bidder profitability of said bid comprises a ratio of said current bidder surplus to said monetary value of said bid by said agent.


2. (Canceled).


3. (Canceled).


4. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim [[3]] 1, wherein said auctions open for bidding at the same time.


5. (Canceled).


6. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein said bidding-related information received from said bidder further comprises any of:

a specified list of auctions to which the agent, without further recourse to said bidder, should restrict participation in;

specified limits on the values of bids that can be placed by said agent, without further recourse to said bidder, in various auctions;

a specified limit on the number of simultaneously outstanding bids that said agent, without further recourse to said bidder, can have at any time; and

a specified limit on the sum of values of all simultaneously outstanding bids that said agent, without further recourse to said bidder, can have at any time.

7.   (Canceled).

8.   (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein said current bidder profitability of said bid is further required to be greater than a bidder-specified minimum limit.

9.   (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein:

said auctions are ascending price auctions for selling to bidders;

said specified limits on the values of bids that can be placed by said agent comprise maximum allowable values;

said specified limit on the sum of values of all simultaneously outstanding bids that said agent can have at any time comprises a maximum allowable value; and

said current bidder surplus for a bid is computed by said agent by subtraction of a new computed bid value from the maximum allowable bid value specified by the bidder, for a particular auction.

10.   (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein:

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said auctions are descending price auctions for purchasing from bidders;

said specified limits on the values of bids that can be placed by said agent comprise minimum allowable values; and

said current bidder surplus for a bid is computed by said agent by subtraction of a minimum allowable bid value specified by the bidder from a new computed bid value, for a particular auction.


11.    (Currently Amended) A method of conducting online auctions, said method ~~including the steps of~~ comprising:

arranging offerings for auction in one or more selected groups located across multiple online auction sites;

constraining all of said auctions within the same group from said one or more selected groups to close for bidding simultaneously; and

soliciting bids in one or more of said auctions by software agents representing bidders, said software agents determining at any time, on the basis of bidding-related information input by a bidder and by checking the current status of one or more auctions, wherein said checking comprises obtaining information relating to a value of a current highest bid in a first auction and using said information in determining whether to place an additional bid in said first auction or some other auction and, if ~~so~~ said agent determines to place an additional bid, said agent selecting an auction to place said additional bid in, and placing said additional bid in said selected auction,

wherein said bidding-related information received from said bidder comprises:

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a specified limit on a total value of each bid in each auction and a total value of all bids

from all auctions; and

~~a specified rule for determining at any time, whether said agent, without further recourse~~

~~to said bidder, should place additional bids and, if so, in which auctions to place said additional~~

~~bids, wherein said specified rule comprises:~~

wherein selection of an auction for placing a bid in, whether initially or on being outbid,

by said agent, is to be such that the current bidder surplus of said bid is maximized and non-

negative, wherein said current bidder surplus of said bid comprises a monetary value computed

from said bid value and said specified limit on the value of the bid, and

wherein selection of an auction for placing a bid in, whether initially or on being outbid,

by said agent, is to be such that the current bidder profitability of said bid is maximized, and non-

negative, wherein said current bidder profitability of said bid comprises the ratio of a monetary

value computed from said bid value and said specified limit on the value of the bid to said bid

value.

12. (Currently Amended) A system for dynamically bidding, through a software agent, in

online auctions accessible over a communications network, ~~including~~ said system comprising:

means for inputting bidding-related information from a bidder; and supporting said agent,

wherein said agent initially selects a plurality of auctions to place bids in, in accordance with said

bidding-related information and a current status of one or more auctions, and places bids in said

plurality of auctions, wherein said plurality of auctions are located across multiple online auction

sites and are scheduled to close for bidding simultaneously;

said agent, on being outbid in an auction, itself determines, on the basis of said

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bidding-related information and <u>by checking</u> the current status of one or more auctions, <u>wherein</u> <u>said checking comprises obtaining information relating to a value of a current highest bid in a</u> <u>first auction and using said information in determining</u> whether to place an additional bid <u>in said</u> <u>first auction or some other auction</u> and, if <s>so</s> <u>said agent determines to place an additional bid,</u> <u>said agent</u> selecting an auction to place said additional bid in, and placing said additional bid in said selected auction,

wherein said bidding-related information received from said bidder comprises<u>:</u>

a specified limit on a total value of each bid in each auction and a total value of all bids from all auctions<s>; and</s>

<s>a specified rule for determining at any time, whether said agent, without further recourse to said bidder, should place additional bids and, if so, in which auctions to place said additional bids, wherein said specified rule comprises:</s>

<u>wherein</u> selection of an auction for placing a bid in, whether initially or on being outbid, by said agent, is to be such that the current bidder surplus of said bid is maximized and non-negative, wherein said current bidder surplus of said bid comprises a monetary value computed from said bid value and said specified limit on the value of the bid, and

<u>wherein</u> selection of an auction for placing a bid in, whether initially or on being outbid, by said agent, is to be such that the current bidder profitability of said bid is maximized, and non-negative, wherein said current bidder profitability of said bid comprises the ratio of a monetary value computed from said bid value and said specified limit on the value of the bid to said bid value.

13.    (Canceled).

14. (Canceled).

15. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim [[14]] 12, wherein said auctions open for bidding at the same time.

16. (Canceled).

17. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 12, wherein said bidding-related information received from said bidder further comprises any of:

a specified list of auctions to which the agent, without further recourse to said bidder, should restrict participation in;

specified limits on the values of bids that can be placed by said agent, without further recourse to said bidder, in various auctions;

a specified limit on the number of simultaneously outstanding bids that said agent, without further recourse to said bidder, can have at any time; and

a specified limit on the sum of values of all simultaneously outstanding bids that said agent, without further recourse to said bidder, can have at any time.

18. (Canceled).

19. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 12, wherein said current bidder profitability of said bid is further required to be greater than a bidder-specified minimum limit.

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20. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 12, wherein:

said auctions are ascending price auctions for selling to bidders;

said specified limits on the values of bids that can be placed by said agent comprise 15 maximum allowable values;

said specified limit on the sum of values of all simultaneously outstanding bids that said agent can have at any time comprises a maximum allowable value; and

said current bidder surplus for a bid is computed by said agent by subtraction of a new computed bid value from the maximum allowable bid value specified by the bidder, for a particular auction.

21. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 12, wherein:

said auctions are descending price auctions for purchasing from bidders; said specified limits on the values of bids that can be placed by said agent comprise minimum allowable values; and

said current bidder surplus for a bid is computed by said agent by subtraction of a minimum allowable bid value specified by the bidder from a new computed bid value, for a particular auction.

22. (Currently Amended) A system for conducting online auctions, ~~including~~ said system comprising:

computing means for arranging offerings for auction in one or more selected groups located across multiple online auction sites;

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computing means for constraining all of said auctions within the same group from the

said one or more selected groups to close for bidding simultaneously; and computing means for

soliciting bids in one or more of said auctions by software agents representing bidders, said

software agents determining at any time, on the basis of bidding-related information input by a

bidder and <u>by checking</u> the current status of one or more auctions, <u>wherein said checking</u>

<u>comprises obtaining information relating to a value of a current highest bid in a first auction and</u>

<u>using said information in determining</u> whether to place an additional bid <u>in said first auction or</u>

<u>some other auction</u> and, if so <u>said agent determines to place an additional bid,</u> <u>said agent</u>

selecting an auction to place said additional bid in, and placing said additional bid in said

selected auction,

wherein said bidding-related information received from said bidder comprises:

a specified limit on a total value of each bid in each auction and a total value of all bids

from all auctions; and

a specified rule for determining at any time, whether said agent, without further recourse

to said bidder, should place additional bids and, if so, in which auctions to place said additional

bids, wherein said specified rule comprises:

<u>wherein</u> selection of an auction for placing a bid in, whether initially or on being outbid,

by said agent, is to be such that the current bidder surplus of said bid is maximized and non-

negative, wherein said current bidder surplus of said bid comprises a monetary value computed

from said bid value and said specified limit on the value of the bid, and

<u>wherein</u> selection of an auction for placing a bid in, whether initially or on being outbid,

by said agent, is to be such that the current bidder profitability of said bid is maximized, and non-

negative, wherein said current bidder profitability of said bid comprises the ratio of a monetary

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value computed from said bid value and said specified limit on the value of the bid to said bid value.

23.     (Currently Amended) A computer program product comprising a computer readable medium having a computer program recorded therein for dynamically bidding, through a software agent, in online auctions accessible over a communications network, said computer program including:

computer program code means for said agent initially to receive bidding-related information from a bidder;

computer program code means for said agent to initially select a plurality of auctions to place bids in, in accordance with said bidding-related information and the current status of one or more auctions, and to place bids in said plurality of auctions, wherein said plurality of auctions are located across multiple online auction sites and are scheduled to close for bidding simultaneously; and

computer program code means for said agent, on being outbid in one or more auctions, itself to determine, on the basis of said bidding-related information and by checking the current status of one or more auctions, wherein said checking comprises obtaining information relating to a value of a current highest bid in a first auction and using said information in determining whether to place an additional bid in said first auction or some other auction and, if so said agent determines to place an additional bid, said agent selecting an auction to place said additional bid in, and placing said additional bid in said selected auction,

wherein said bidding-related information received from said bidder comprises:

a specified limit on a total value of each bid in each auction and a total value of all bids

from all auctions; and

~~a specified rule for determining at any time, whether said agent, without further recourse~~
~~to said bidder, should place additional bids and, if so, in which auctions to place said additional~~
~~bids, wherein said specified rule comprises:~~

wherein selection of an auction for placing a bid in, whether initially or on being outbid,

by said agent, is to be such that the current bidder surplus of said bid is maximized and non-

negative, wherein said current bidder surplus of said bid comprises a monetary value computed

from said bid value and said specified limit on the value of the bid, and

wherein selection of an auction for placing a bid in, whether initially or on being outbid,

by said agent, is to be such that the current bidder profitability of said bid is maximized, and non-

negative, wherein said current bidder profitability of said bid comprises the ratio of a monetary

value computed from said bid value and said specified limit on the value of the bid to said bid

value.


24.     (Canceled).


25.     (Canceled).


26.     (Currently Amended) The computer program product according to claim [[25]] 23,

wherein said auctions open for bidding at the same time.


27.     (Canceled).

28.     (Previously Presented) The computer program product according to claim 23, wherein said bidding-related information received from said bidder further comprises any of:

a specified list of auctions to which the agent, without further recourse to said bidder, should restrict participation in;

specified limits on the values of bids that can be placed by said agent, without further recourse to said bidder, in various auctions;

a specified limit on the number of simultaneously outstanding bids that said agent, without further recourse to said bidder, can have at any time; and

a specified limit on the sum of values of all simultaneously outstanding bids that said agent, without further recourse to said bidder, can have at any time.


29.     (Canceled).


30.     (Previously Presented) The computer program product according to claim 23, wherein said current bidder profitability of said bid is further required to be greater than a bidder-specified minimum limit.


31.     (Previously Presented) The computer program according to claim 23, wherein:

said auctions are ascending price auctions for selling to bidders;

said specified limits on the values of bids that can be placed by said agent comprise maximum allowable values;

said specified limit on the sum of values of all simultaneously outstanding bids that said

agent can have at any time comprises a maximum allowable value; and

said current bidder surplus for a bid is computed by said agent by subtraction of a

new computed bid value from the maximum allowable bid value specified by the bidder, for a

particular auction.

32.    (Previously Presented) The computer program according to claim 23, wherein:

said auctions are descending price auctions for purchasing from bidders;

said specified limits on the values of bids that can be placed by said agent comprise

minimum allowable values; and

said current bidder surplus for a bid is computed by said agent by subtraction of a

minimum allowable bid value specified by the bidder from a new computed bid value, for a

particular auction.

33.    (Currently Amended) A computer program product comprising a computer readable
medium having a computer program recorded therein for conducting online auctions, said
computer program including:

computer program code means for arranging offerings for auction in one or more

selected groups located across multiple online auction sites;

computer program code means for constraining all of said auctions within the same group

from said one or more selected groups to close for bidding simultaneously; and

computer program code means for soliciting bids in one or more of said auctions by

software agents representing bidders, said software agents determining at any time, on the basis

of bidding-related information input by a bidder and by checking the current status of one or

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more auctions, wherein said checking comprises obtaining information relating to a value of a current highest bid in a first auction and using said information in determining whether to place an additional bid in said first auction or some other auction and, if so said agent determines to place an additional bid, said agent selecting an auction to place said additional bid in, and placing said additional bid in said selected auction.

wherein said bidding-related information received from said bidder comprises:

a specified limit on a total value of each bid in each auction and a total value of all bids from all auctions; and

~~a specified rule for determining at any time, whether said agent, without further recourse to said bidder, should place additional bids and, if so, in which auctions to place said additional bids, wherein said specified rule comprises:~~

wherein selection of an auction for placing a bid in, whether initially or on being outbid, by said agent, is to be such that the current bidder surplus of said bid is maximized and non-negative, wherein said current bidder surplus of said bid comprises a monetary value computed from said bid value and said specified limit on the value of the bid, and

wherein selection of an auction for placing a bid in, whether initially or on being outbid, by said agent, is to be such that the current bidder profitability of said bid is maximized, and non-negative, wherein said current bidder profitability of said bid comprises the ratio of a monetary value computed from said bid value and said specified limit on the value of the bid to said bid value.

Please add the following new claims in the application:

34.    (New) The method according to claim 1, wherein said bidding-related information

received from said bidder further comprises a specified rule for determining at any time, whether said agent, without further recourse to said bidder, should place additional bids and, if so, in which auctions to place said additional bids.

35. (New) The method according to claim 11, wherein said bidding-related information received from said bidder further comprises a specified rule for determining at any time, whether said agent, without further recourse to said bidder, should place additional bids and, if so, in which auctions to place said additional bids.

36. (New) The system according to claim 12, wherein said bidding-related information received from said bidder further comprises a specified rule for determining at any time, whether said agent, without further recourse to said bidder, should place additional bids and, if so, in which auctions to place said additional bids.

37. (New) The system according to claim 22, wherein said bidding-related information received from said bidder further comprises a specified rule for determining at any time, whether said agent, without further recourse to said bidder, should place additional bids and, if so, in which auctions to place said additional bids.

38. (New) The computer program product according to claim 23, wherein said bidding-related information received from said bidder further comprises a specified rule for determining at any time, whether said agent, without further recourse to said bidder, should place additional bids and, if so, in which auctions to place said additional bids.

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39.  (New) The computer program product according to claim 33, wherein said bidding-

related information received from said bidder further comprises a specified rule for determining

at any time, whether said agent, without further recourse to said bidder, should place additional

bids and, if so, in which auctions to place said additional bids.

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